



**Frederick County
Government
Frederick, Maryland**

News Release

Winchester Hall / 12 East Church Street
Frederick, Maryland 21701
CONTACT: Robin K. Santangelo
Public Information Officer
301-600-2590
rsantangelo@FrederickCountyMD.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 12, 2015

COUNTY EXECUTIVE GARDNER ANNOUNCES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

FREDERICK, MD – Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner today announced economic development and job creation priorities.

Executive Gardner said, “I promised during my campaign to make economic development, jobs and improved business growth among the key priorities during my administration. Where the previous administration downgraded the Office of Economic Development and caused confusion in the industry by renaming it, I am restoring the name and elevating it to a cabinet-level position in the County Executive’s Office. When businesses look to expand or seek assistance from Frederick County in the future, they will make their connections more efficiently and know that we have a high regard for all businesses, both large and small, and welcome a wide variety of industries.”

By changing the name from the Department of Business Development and Retention back to the Office of Economic Development (OED) and elevating the organizational placement of the office, Executive Gardner aims to streamline and improve services to the business community. Helen Propheter will remain as director of the office, continuing her efforts to create a favorable climate in which businesses may expand and grow.

Executive Gardner also announced the creation of a cabinet-level business industry group comprised of leaders from all parts of the county and a wide diversity of industries. These leaders will advise her and work together to develop policies that will move Frederick County forward toward improved economic vitality.

A notice will run in the weekend edition of the [Frederick News Post](#) that invites individuals interested in applying to serve on the new business advisory group to submit a letter of interest and resume by March 27.

(more)

Additional aspects of Executive Gardner's economic development plan include the recruitment of a full-time agriculture business development specialist. The previous county administration transferred work from this position to an employee who specialized in agricultural preservation, but Executive Gardner stated that the agricultural industry's vital role in Frederick County's economy deserves a separate agriculture specialist to help the industry grow as the county grows.

"We take great pride in the fact that our county is home to the largest number of farms in Maryland and Frederick County has been the long-time leading dairy county in Maryland. Our agricultural community is growing. So many of our farms are diversifying products, new agriculture businesses are being established and these businesses need a county staff person dedicated to assisting them in this process. We appreciate the double-duty and hard work that has been accomplished over the past few years, but I will reinstate this as a unique position to work directly on ag-industry economic development," commented Executive Gardner.

Other economic development initiatives announced by Executive Gardner include:

- Improve outreach to minority businesses to develop a more diversified business environment where all are welcome to succeed;
- Reinstate the small business revolving loan fund that was abolished by the previous county administration, but set it up differently as a loan guarantee that will be more efficient in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs;
- Support for the county's business incubator that will be announced in the future.

The Frederick County Office of Economic Development, previously called the Business Development and Retention Department, creates partnerships and opportunities in support of lasting business growth. Capitalizing on a skilled workforce and strategic location, the office nurtures a diverse, business-friendly environment.

For more information, visit www.DiscoverFrederickMD.com to find out why Frederick County, Maryland, is an ideal place to live, work and locate a business. Or, contact OED Director Propheter at 301-600-1058 or via e-mail at hpropheter@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

###